

Respectfully, the rejection is traversed. In fact, a very careful reading of Ohga reveals that the muffle that is referred to as being quartz, high purity carbon, pyrolytic-coated high purity carbon, SiC-coated high purity carbon, is the muffle tube of the heating furnace mounted below the draw furnace (see claim 1) and not the draw furnace. In particular, the present invention, as stated in claim 1 and the Summary, of Ohga is a "process of melt drawing an optical fiber from a preform therefor in which a heating furnace (1) comprising a muffle tube (2) inside thereof through which the optical fiber is passed..." See also, Example 4 in which, immediately following the discussion of the heating furnace in Col. 7, 25-46, the material for the muffle tube (2) was described. Accordingly, Applicants' assert that Ohga does not fairly teach providing a high purity silicon carbide coating on the inner surface of the graphite muffle of a draw furnace followed by disposing the waveguide fiber preform in the muffle, as claimed in the present invention. Since there is no suggestion in Ohga to use a SiC coated graphite muffle tube in a draw furnace, let alone with a high purity SiC coating, the combination with Tsuchiya is likewise inappropriate. In short, the prior art does not provide any teaching or suggestion to one of ordinary skill in the art to produce the Applicant's claimed invention, either alone or in combination. Accordingly, the 103(a) rejection must be withdrawn.

## **2. Conclusion**

Based upon the above amendments, remarks, and papers of record, Applicant believes the pending claims of the above-captioned application are in allowable form and patentable over the prior art of record. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the pending claims 6-8 and 10-14 and a prompt Notice of Allowance thereon.

Applicant believes that no extension of time is necessary to make this Response timely. Should Applicant be in error, Applicant respectfully requests that the Office grant such time extension pursuant to 37 C.F.R. § 1.136(a) as necessary to make this Reply timely, and hereby authorizes the Office to charge any necessary fee or surcharge with respect to said time extension to the deposit account of the undersigned firm of attorneys, Deposit Account 03-3325.

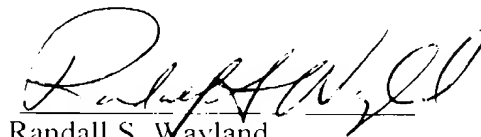
Please direct any questions or comments to Randall S. Wayland at 607-974-0463.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date:

5/2/03



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